



United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Shasta-Trinity National Forest
Shasta McCloud Management Unit

McCloud Ranger Station

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To Whom It May Concern:

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest (Forest) proposes to continue to permit livestock grazing by incorporating adaptive management strategies on the Toad Mountain Allotment within the McCloud Ranger District while meeting direction from the Shasta-Trinity National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The proposed action is designed to maintain trends in vegetation and watershed conditions where current conditions are satisfactory and functioning and improve trends where conditions are degraded or non-functional relative to livestock grazing. The planning area is located in Siskiyou County, State of California, in all or part of T40N R1E S1, 12, 13, 24; T40N R2E S5 – 8, 17, 18; T41N R1E S1 – 3, 11 – 15, 22 – 27, 36; T41N R2E S3 – 9, 16 – 21, 29 – 32; T42N R1E S22 – 27, 34 – 36; and T42N R2E S17 – 21, 28 – 34 Mount Diablo Meridian. Please see the attached map for the location of the proposed project area.

This project is designed to be consistent with programmatic direction detailed in the Forest Plan for the Porcupine Butte and McCloud Flats Management Areas, Late Successional Reserve Management Prescription (MP), Riparian Reserves MP, Roaded Recreation MP, Wildlife Habitat Management MP, and Commercial Wood Products Emphasis MP.

Purpose and Need for Action:

The Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action is the implementation of a range management program that complies with the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and the Northwest Forest Plan Aquatic Conservation Strategies. The proposed action will address monitoring, sustainability, diversity, ecological condition, stewardship and desired future conditions as related to rangeland management (Forest Plan, 4-22). Additionally, the project will incorporate all applicable laws, regulations and policies in the decision of whether to authorize continued livestock grazing on the allotments analyzed to meet the current management direction.

There is Congressional intent to allow grazing on suitable lands when it is consistent with other multiple-use goals and objectives (Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960, Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act of 1974, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and National Forest Management Act of 1976). Contributing to economic and social well being of people by providing opportunities for economic diversity and by promoting stable communities that depend on range resources for their livelihood is a Forest Service



objective (Forest Service Manual 2202.1). It is Forest Service policy to make forage available to qualified livestock operators from lands suitable for grazing consistent with land management plans (Forest Service Manual 2203.1), and with resource objectives in the Forest Plan. Management of permitted livestock grazing is spelled out in the NEPA Decision and then incorporated into an Allotment Management Plan (AMP).

The Rescission Act of 1995 (PL 104-19) requires that each National Forest identify all allotments for which an environmental analysis is needed. Section 504 (b) and (c) of the Rescission Act requires a new Term Grazing Permit be issued under the same terms and conditions as the previous term permit, unless there are reasons other than the lack of the necessary environmental analysis for not doing so.

Background

The Toad Mountain Range Management EA will assess proposals for the authorization of grazing on 33,755 acres (more or less) that have historically been grazed in the Shasta-McCloud Management Unit. Of these 33,755 acres, approximately 28,573 acres are National Forest Systems lands and the remainder are private lands. This area includes the area assessed in the Bartle, Bear Creek, and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments Environmental Assessment signed in 2008 and appealed to the Regional Forester where the decision was remanded. As a result, current management has continued under the authority of the Rescissions Act of 1995 and the Interior Appropriations Act of 2004. The Forest is now preparing a new EA to address concerns brought forward in the appeal decision for the Toad Mountain Allotment. A decision of whether or not to reauthorize grazing on the Bartle and Bear Creek allotments will be addressed at a later time.

Decision to be Made and Responsible Official:

The Responsible Official on this project is J. Sharon Heywood, Forest Supervisor. The scope of the decision to be made is:

1. Whether or not to reauthorize grazing on the Toad Mountain Range allotment, including connected actions; or
2. Make no decision at this time.

Proposed Action:

The proposed action may be modified to address concerns or issues brought forward by the public and will include any connected actions that may be identified through analysis. The following table (Table 1) and supporting narrative show the proposed management for the Toad Mountain Allotment.

Table 1. Comparison of the season of use and livestock numbers for the proposed action and current management on the Toad Mountain Allotment.

	Allotment Acres	Livestock Numbers	Season of Use	Head Months
Current Management	NFS lands: 28,574 Private lands: 5,182 Total*: 33,755	NFS lands: 115 Private lands: 10 Total: 125	7/16 to 10/30	NFS lands: 404 Private lands: 35 Total*: 440

Proposed Action	NFS lands: 28,574 Private lands: 5,182 Total*: 33,755	NFS lands: 115 Private lands: 0 Total: 115	7/1 to 9/30	NFS lands: 347 Private lands: 0 Total: 347

*Adding differences are dues to rounding.

The current Term Grazing Permit on the Toad Mountain Allotment authorizes 112 cow-calf pairs and 3 bulls on National Forest System lands and 9 cow-calf pairs and 1 bull on private land within the allotment boundary from July 16 to October 31. Under the proposed action, the season of use would be shifted and shortened and the “on and off” provision for private land within the allotment would be eliminated. This would result in a total reduction of 93 head-months (a 21 percent reduction) compared to current management.

Standards and Guidelines

Forage utilization criteria are set out in the Forest Plan based on the allowable amount of herbaceous forage and woody browse consumed for the type of site (upland, wet meadow, and riparian) and the current ecological condition relative to the desired condition (Table 2).

Utilization standards for browse on woody vegetation would be included in those sites that include woody vegetation susceptible to browse. The utilization standards and guidelines for each key area may be adjusted, consistent with the Forest Plan, as monitoring shows that ecological condition at the key area changes to either meet desired condition or begins to fail to meet desired condition.

Table 2. Percent Allowable Utilization Levels by Ecological Condition.

	Upland	Wet Meadow	Riparian
Satisfactory Ecological Condition	40 – 55%* ---	45-60% 3” to 4”**	40 – 50% 3” to 4”
Unsatisfactory Ecological Condition	25 – 35% ---	25 – 40% 4” to 5”	20 – 30% 4” to 5”
Utilization Levels of Woody Vegetation	45 – 55%	45 – 55%%	35 – 50%

*This figure represents the percentage of the current year’s growth that is acceptable to be removed during a single grazing year (utilization level).

**Represents the approximate height of vegetation that is estimated will remain on the site after the end of the grazing season. This figure is an estimate based on a general knowledge of the herbaceous species that occupy these types of sites within the Klamath Province. These figures must be refined based on species composition and growing conditions. (Forest Plan, p. 4-23).

The proposed action would authorize the continued grazing of livestock on the Toad Mountain allotment within the analysis area through issuance of a Term Grazing Permit for the allotment while implementing the following design criteria and specific actions:

1. Livestock will graze in Toad Mountain Allotment between the earliest on-date of July 1 and the latest off-date of September 30.
2. Incorporates Shasta-Trinity National Forest Range Readiness Guide (includes indicators for range readiness of upland and riparian species). On dates would be based on plant phenology, soil moisture level, annual climate variation, or other site-specific constraints for each key area. The date livestock are removed from the

allotment is dependent on compliance with forage utilization standards and may be earlier than permitted if forage utilization standards are exceeded.

3. Graze cattle (cow-calf pairs¹, cows, yearlings or bulls). A maximum of 4% of cattle on the allotment may be mature bulls.
4. Manage livestock distribution to prevent impacts to resources and facilitate movement towards desired condition.
5. Keep livestock within the allotment boundaries during the specified time periods and monitor for excess use on adjacent National Forest System lands.
6. Allowable forage utilization levels will be monitored within, and adjacent to, key areas following standards and guidelines in Table 2 (Forest Plan 4-23), subject to refinements consistent with the Forest Plan.
7. Streambeds, banks, aquatic habitat, riparian vegetation composition, and structure would be monitored for progress toward desired condition objectives.
8. Implement the Pacific Southwest Region Best Management Practices for Water Quality as they apply to Range Management.
9. Herding, to control livestock use seasonally.
10. Use of salt, including prohibition of placing salt within ¼ mile of water sources and heritage resource sites.
11. Long-term trend monitoring would be conducted in representative key areas within key riparian community types on a 5 year cycle.
12. Evaluate new noxious weed infestations as they are discovered and apply appropriate treatments.
13. Protect *Rorippa columbiae* (a Forest Service Sensitive plant species) sub-population at Dry Lake by fencing Dry Lake Dugout #2 (located on the west side of the lake near Harris Springs Road) to exclude livestock (T.41N R.2E S.18 nesw M.D.M.).
14. Monitor to detect changes in the protected *Rorippa columbiae* population vs. grazed populations as part of information gathering related to Conservation Strategy for this species that states to “monitor plants on public land to determine population trends and effects of management treatments and practices”
15. Maintenance of a portable electric fence around Toad Lake to prevent livestock use of the area (T.41N, R.2E, S.9 swsw, M.D.M.).
16. Construction of a 10 to 30 acre livestock holding field and handling facilities in the open-canopy, upland forest area of to facilitate end of season livestock gathering near T.42N, R.2E, S. 30 and 31 M.D.M. This Area is under the Commercial Wood

¹ A calf grazed with a cow as a pair must be less than six months old. For calculating head months, one cow-calf pair, one cow, one yearling, and one bull are all considered to be equal to one head month.

Products Emphasis Management Prescription (Matrix) of the Forest Plan and outside of Riparian Reserves and Late Successional Reserves.

17. Maintenance of other existing range improvement structures as needed for livestock management and resource protection.
18. Require appropriate, additional environmental analysis for any proposal to create new or maintain existing dugout pit tanks for livestock. Under the proposed action, no excavation of dugout pit tanks will occur.
19. Compliance with the terms and conditions of the Term Grazing Permit and the Allotment Management Plan developed from this proposed action would through compliance monitoring by Forest Service employees and implementation of enforcement mechanisms in the Grazing Permit Administration Handbook (FSH 2209.13 Chapter 10).
20. Maintain communication with the Grazing Permittee(s) through the course of the season to insure that livestock distribution is adjusted accordingly to insure compliance with utilization standards for the season and to facilitate movement towards desired conditions.

Decision Framework:

The decision to be made is whether to authorize livestock use in the Toad Mountain Allotment as proposed above, whether to authorize livestock use based on an alternative that better resolves issues, or not to authorize livestock use in the Toad Mountain Allotment. The Responsible Official will decide whether to authorize livestock grazing within the project area based on the comparison of existing and desired conditions from existing resource condition data derived from the interdisciplinary assessments of the project area. New information provided through scoping will be taken into consideration for this proposal and will determine what additional issues need to be addressed. The decision would be implemented through issuance of Term Grazing Permits and Allotment Management Plan for authorized grazing on the Toad Mountain Allotment or through cancellation of the existing Term Grazing Permit for the Toad Mountain Allotment.

Public Involvement:

Public scoping for Bartle, Bear Creek and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments EA was initiated with an advertisement in the newspaper of record, the Redding Searchlight, on April 2, 2007. In addition, letters and project maps were mailed to the public mailing list for the Bartle, Bear Creek and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments EA. Notice for Comment on the Bartle, Bear Creek and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments Draft EA was initiated with an advertisement in the Redding Searchlight on August 20, 2008. Opportunity for appeal of the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Bartle, Bear Creek and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments EA was initiated with an advertisement that printed in the Redding Searchlight on October, 23 2008. The project was appealed and the Appeal Deciding Official reversed the Forest Supervisor's decisions to authorize grazing on the Bartle, Bear Creek, and Toad Mountain Grazing Allotments.

This new project has been included in the Schedule of Proposed Actions for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest as of April 2010. After 30 days, the interdisciplinary team will review all of the

scoping comments received, identify additional issues from the scoping comments that need to be addressed in the proposed action or any additional alternatives, and begin analyzing the alternatives. Scoping comments should be as specific as possible in order for the Forest Service to identify and consider each issue or concern. Your input and participation are encouraged. While comments will be accepted and considered up until the decision is made, timely submission of scoping comments is important for them to be fully considered and incorporated into the proposed action or any additional alternatives as appropriate.

Scoping comments should be received by June 10, 2010. You can mail, fax, electronic in-box or hand deliver your comments with your name and address to: Randy Gould, District Ranger, Shasta-McCloud Management Unit, Mt. Shasta Ranger Station, 204 West Alma, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067; Phone (530) 926-4511. If you would like more information on this project, please contact Philip Brownsey, Range Program Manager at (530) 226-2432.

Sincerely,

/s/ Randall Gould
RANDALL GOULD
District Ranger

Enclosures